Nippentucket Bay High School Case Study

Rhode Island Department of Education and
The Center for Assessment

Explanation and Considerations for Use

This case study was developed to present one possible approach to implementing the Rhode Island Diploma System. The Nippentucket Bay High School case study describes a hypothetical school attempting to implement a school-wide diploma assessment. This case study may be used for a text-based discussion; it also includes a mapping exercise that can help faculty think and talk about the many steps involved in designing and implementing a portfolio system.

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http://www.ride.ri.gov/highschoolreform/dslat/
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High School Diploma System Technical Assistance Clinic
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Establishing System Alignment: Access and Opportunity for ALL students

What does Alignment to Common Standards mean?

- **GSEs in Mathematics, Reading, and Written & Oral Communication**
- **Applied Learning Standards across Content Areas**
- **GSEs in Science, Social Studies, The Arts, Technology**

A Case Study - Phase I: Nippentucket Bay High School (NBHS)*

This case study explores how one school might approach meeting requirements of RI's PBGR Diploma System. An overview of 5 phases is presented; however, only Phase I is described in detail in these mini clinic materials.

- **A Course Mapping Strategy**
- **Analysis of Curriculum Alignment to Common Standards (GSEs)**
- **Analysis of Course Enrollment Patterns**

* This hypothetical case study is intended to illustrate how a school/district might approach establishing their School-Wide Diploma System that complies with the state guidance and the Regents' regulation regarding graduation-by-proficiency. This case study is far from an ideal case, and, as with all case studies, illustrates *one approach* when several approaches may be acceptable.

Rhode Island Graduation by Proficiency
A Case Study: Nippentucket Bay High School (NBHS)

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INTRODUCTION to the Case Study

This hypothetical case study describes how one Rhode Island School district (Nippentucket Bay High School) might go about developing a local assessment system for the purpose of meeting RI's Graduation by Proficiency Requirements and preparing for the Peer Review Process. To create some context for the decisions to be made, the school context and the preparation (identifying needs, looking at common curriculum, and looking at common assessments) to support student learning are briefly described. Then, *the first phase of five general phases* for building upon the existing local assessments and course offerings is presented.

Educators reading this case study should consider what processes are already in place in their schools that can be built upon (such as having implemented a standards-based curriculum or a school-wide portfolio assessment system) to create a more comprehensive local assessment system. Each phase in this process will also require thoughtful decisions about staff professional development, leadership strategies, and public relations within the school community in order to build a common understanding of graduation by proficiency.

Overview of Each Phase in this School's Process

PHASE I – ACCESS & OPPORTUNITY - Ensuring Opportunity to Access the Common Standards through Curriculum

This section of the case study includes strategies to assure that *ALL students* will have access to a rigorous and supportive curriculum and the opportunity to demonstrate learning in a variety of ways. There is a Sample Course Mapping – that demonstrates how this school is working to link the RI Grade Span Expectations (GSEs) for English Language Arts with courses taught at the high school. Ensuring that all students have the opportunity to access the standards – through courses or other school-supported offerings – is the first step in the SYSTEM ALIGNMENT process. The Alignment of GSEs to courses is then followed by the school's analysis of curriculum coverage and course enrollment patterns of their students.

Phase I seeks to answer these questions about access and opportunity:

- Which courses and learning opportunities address GSEs for mathematics, reading, and written and oral communication?
- Are the identified GSEs included for instruction? Are they consistently assessed? Are our expectations comparable to the level of rigor described in GSEs?
- Which learning opportunities, including courses and sequences of courses, address Applied Learning standards across the set of subject areas and school experience?
- Do *ALL* students have access and opportunity?

- What are the course enrollment patterns for *ALL* students (and sub-groups of students)?
- Does the system have supports in place to meet the unique needs of some students?

PHASE II- ESTABLISHING GUIDELINES for the LOCAL ASSESSMENT SYSTEM - Characteristics of a Local Assessment System (LAS)

This section (*not included in this handout*) details different aspects that a school district should consider when evolving its local assessment system. Communicating guidelines for the LAS and PBGR should be part of an ongoing communications plan. The characteristics of the LAS presented in Phase II suggest ways to answer these questions:

- Our current assessments serve a variety of purposes. Which assessments will best meet the intent of PBGR?
- How will we fill the "assessment gaps" if we identify areas not currently assessed? (E.g., classroom assessments, end of course exams, exhibitions, portfolios, etc.)
- How do we link assessments to RI's ELA, Mathematics, and Science Grade Span Expectations (GSEs) and Applied Learning standards? What are we already doing in these curricular areas that we can build upon? Can one assessment be used to assess content or skills in more than one content area?
- What is our plan for establishing standards (GSEs) and assessing technology, the arts, and social studies? What are we already doing in these areas that we can build upon?
- What role do the RI Applied Learning Standards play in the local assessment system across all the content areas? How do we support students demonstrating Applied Learning in areas of specialized interest outside of the six content areas?
- What other processes or procedures do we need to consider (e.g., Local Review Cycle, Professional Development, Establishing an Appeals Process)? What is already in place that we can build upon or adapt?

PHASE III – BUILDING the LAS - Establishing a Local Proficiency-Based Assessment Plan (*not included in this handout*)

This section describes the rationale this school used to identify assessments chosen for their LAS. Each school district should consider why it might or might not use a particular assessment in its local system and determine how much assessment evidence will be considered "sufficient" for making proficiency decisions. An Assessment Plan for ELA and Mathematics and an overview of Requirements for Six Core Content Areas are described, using the different PBGR assessments chosen by the school district (e.g., classroom tasks, portfolios, end-of-course exams, projects, etc.). Multiple assessment types in this case study illustrate the many ways assessments might be used in the LAS.

PHASE IV – REQUIREMENTS for "Proficiency Ratings" in ELA and Mathematics (*not included in this handout*)

School districts, with guidance from RIDE, will need to establish "proficiency ratings" for each of the content areas. "Sufficiency of assessment evidence" is illustrated with examples for ELA and mathematics in this case study, as well as a discussion of Exceptional Circumstances and Evidence for Review.

PHASE V – Preparing for the Peer Review Process (*not included in this handout*)
Every school/district will be required to participate in a *Peer Review Process*. The Peer Review process …

- Will evaluate evidence of quality of school/district's high school diploma system
- Use state developed criteria and processes
- Prepare school/district recommendations to improve the local PBGR system (which will be submitted to the Commissioner for approval)

Rhode Island Graduation by Proficiency Case Study
Nippentucket Bay High School (NBHS)

School Context

Nippentucket Bay High School (NBHS) serves approximately 850 students in grades 9-12. It is the only high school in the Bay School District, which includes two middle schools (serving grades 6-8), five elementary schools (four K-5 schools and one school K-8) and two regional early learning centers for PK-K students with special needs. Over the past five years, the schools serving grades 6-8 have changed their focus from a more traditional junior high program to a program the staff feels is more appropriate to meeting the needs of young adolescents. Teaming, differentiated heterogeneous instruction, and interdisciplinary studies have taken the place of earlier homogeneous teaching of content area courses. These program changes at grades 6-8 have also assured a more a common core of curricular objectives and expectations for all students entering the ninth grade. Documentation about these changes in the pre-high school buildings can be found in the district's materials it is gathering in preparation for its NEASC accreditation in 2006. The district intends to have the high school changes, including PBGR system, in place for the NEASC review. All schools in the district have implemented a standards-based curriculum.

Preparing for the Process

Identifying Needs: Nippentucket Bay High School, concerned that almost 40% of its graduates entering Rhode Island Community College require at least some remediation, has begun to struggle with its own restructuring initiative in order to nip this disturbing trend. NBHS administrators and faculty believe that while the college-prep, honors, and advanced placement courses offered at NBHS meet the traditional needs of their high-achieving students, most of the "basic skills" courses offered in mathematics and English language arts fall short of preparing students for meeting the intellectual challenges of post-secondary education and high-performance workplaces. In addition, the school is engaged in an on-going discussion about the nature of meaningful applied learning and the cross-disciplinary skills of Rhode Island's Common Core of Learning.

Looking at Common Standards: The school staff was excited about the draft Rhode Island high school GSEs (grade span expectations) that were offered for review in June 2004 since they provided specifics for assessment. In reviewing the draft GSEs, they

were also relieved to see that much of what they were already using for curriculum alignment (e.g., New Standards Performance Standards) was evidenced in the new GSEs. The school used the GSEs over the summer to begin mapping their courses and thinking about their assessment evidence. The school's goal is to provide a more rigorous and supportive learning program to assure that ALL students have ample opportunities and support to achieve RI's standards. The school faculty and administration have used the requirement to develop a PBGR (proficiency-based graduation requirement) system at the district level as an opportunity to take a deeper look at its course offerings and support structures for internal coherence and to spur considerations of how to increase its effectiveness in reaching the school's goals and the state's standards.

To this end, NBHS formed a High School Advisory Committee, which began their work by meeting with the middle school advisory committee members and high school guidance counselors during two designated district in-service days during the school year. Since then, the NBHS Advisory Committee has attended a 3-day retreat each summer for the past two years. This on-going collaboration has provided opportunities for the school's staff to expand their capacities to research and share a variety of approaches to instruction, review and analyze district and school assessment results, and consider the implications for current course offerings and the emerging graduation by proficiency requirements, including guidance on Applied Learning standards.

Looking at Common Assessments: After visitations to several RI high schools involved with the Gates Network activities, several NBHS teachers on the advisory committee decided to use their courses to pilot senior exhibitions as learning/teaching experiences and as means to provide assessment evidence that students were meeting the standards. After two years of experimentation, the committee is now ready to recommend that exhibitions be included as a graduation requirement for all NBSH students. The committee is still deliberating about some of the additional common assessment formats and experiences that might be required of all students to enable them to show their proficiency on the depth and breadth of the RI state standards. The advisory committee believes that the format of senior exhibitions can be flexible enough to meet individual student needs and interests while creating relevant interdisciplinary and in-depth learning experiences consistent with expectations in *Rhode Island's Common Core of Learning for a New Century* (*Common Core*), the state's *Grade Span Expectations* (GSEs), and the new state guidelines for the district's Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements (PBGR) system. The committee is also wrestling with the issue of how much of the assessment work must be common at the district/school level, and how much might be individual to course, teacher, or student, or change over time.

SYSTEM ALIGNMENT
Course Mapping – An Alignment Strategy for Determining Access and Opportunity

To determine the status of access and opportunity for all students, the NBHS curriculum leaders decided to use the draft GSEs in reading, mathematics, and written and oral communication to review course alignment. This strategy was seen as an efficient way to quickly identify areas for decision making related to course offerings, course content, and local assessment. They planned to do a "second pass" for Applied Learning standards after mapping the main sequences of all courses to the GSEs.

(1) A matrix was created for each grade level, listing GSEs for local curriculum and assessment in reading, written and oral communication, or mathematics. (See one sample matrix on page 8 for aligning reading GSEs with courses offered to grade 9 students.)

(2) To begin the mapping process, high school department meetings were used to discuss the descriptions of the concepts and skills described in each GSE in their content areas, so that there was a better understanding of the intent of the GSEs *before mapping courses*.

(3) Teachers then indicated which GSEs in each content cluster were consistently taught and assessed in each course they taught. In addition to considering how the course content and skills aligned, comparable rigor (as described in GSEs) was noted. Where several teachers taught the same course, such as Level 1 English, teachers worked together to review the GSE alignment with course assessments. This collaborative mapping (for courses with the same course titles) assured that students would have access to the same learning opportunities even if different teachers taught those courses.

(4) Individual teacher's course mappings were compiled for each grade level so the information could be analyzed for gaps and used to guide course revisions, professional development and planning related to instructional strategies, and development or modification of additional assessments, if needed.

(5) Analyses of cross-course mappings and course enrollment patterns were used to identify a range of possible actions to be taken.

***The following pages* show:**

- An individual teacher's course mapping template, filled out for all learning opportunities (e.g., school newspaper, debate club) or courses taught by that teacher (page 8);
- Specific directions for this course mapping strategy (page 9);
- A sample summary of course mappings compiled by the English department for ELA course alignment mappings for grade 9 course offerings (page 10);
- Staff analysis of the ELA course mappings (pages 11-12); and
- School data and analysis of course enrollment patterns at NBHS (pages 13-15).

Individual Course Alignment Review: GRADE (S) _____ for Reading GSEs

The Reading Content Clusters below list related GSEs for local curriculum and assessment. Review the descriptions of concepts and skills for each of RI's grades 9-10 reading GSEs. Then indicate which GSEs are addressed in each course you teach. Use the KEY to show GSEs explicitly taught/reinforced (I), assessed (A), and comparable rigor to GSEs (+/√/). Teachers teaching the same course should work together to indicate "consensus" mapping of GSEs to the course. This information will be compiled across courses and inform course revisions if needed.

Reading Content Clusters **KEY** I=Instruction A=Assessed +/√/- = Rigor	**Course #1** ***A Sample – Basic Eng 9***	**Course #2** ***A Sample – Earth Science 9***	**Course #3**	**Other Learning Activity** **(e.g., *Exhibitions, Portfolios*)**
R11 – Reading Fluency and Accuracy R—11.1 Accuracy R—11.2 Fluency R—11.3 Fluency				
R2 and R3 – Vocabulary Strategies and Breadth of Vocabulary R—2.1 Using strategies R—3.1 Identifying synonyms R—3.2 Selecting appropriate words	***R-2.1 – I,*** √ ***Vocab strategies taught, not assessed, of comparable rigor (√) to GSE***			
R4 – Initial Und of Literary Text R—4.1 Identify, describe, or make predictions R—4.2 Paraphrase or summarize R—4.3 Generate questions R—4.4 Identify text features R—4.5 Identify literary devices				
R5, R6, and R16 – Analysis and Interpretation of Literary Text R—5.1 Explain and support R—5.2 Examine characterization R—5.3 Make inferences R—5.4 Explain point of view R—5.5 Explain author's message or theme R—6.1 Use of literary devices R—16.1 Compare stories R—16.2 Provide relevant details	***R-5.1 – I, A, - Skills taught, assessed, of less (-) comparable rigor to GSE***			
R7 – Initial Understanding of Informational Text R—7.1 Obtain information R—7.2 Using information to answer R—7.3 Organizing information R—7.4 Generate questions R—7.5 Identify text features		**R-7.1 – A,** √ ***Skills assessed and of comparable rigor to GSE***		
R8 - Analysis and Interpretation of Informational Text R—8.1 Explain connections R—8.2 Synthesize and evaluate R—8.3 Draw inferences R—8.4 Distinguish fact/opinion, bias R—8.5 Make inferences R—8.6 Evaluate clarity and accuracy				
R12 and R13 – Reading Strategies R—12.1 Using self-monitoring R—13.1 Comprehension strategies				
R14 – Habit of Reading Widely R—14.1 Reading with frequency R—14.2 Wide range of texts R—14.3 Multiple texts for depth *R—17 Literate Community*				
R15 – Research across Content Areas		**R-15.1-4– A,** √		

R—15.1 Identify potential sources R—15.2 Evaluate information R—15.3 Organize, interpret information R—15.4 Draw conclusions		***Skills assessed and of comparable rigor to GSE***		

Course Mapping Strategy

➢ Part 1 – Create Individual (Teacher) Course Mappings

1. **Choose one of the mapping templates to complete a mapping for the courses that you teach (or for a learning activity that you supervise) –** Use reading GSEs, mathematics GSEs, or written and oral communication GSEs for your mapping.

2. **Write in the name of the courses you will be mapping under "Course #1, #2, etc.**" If you and a colleague teach the same course, work together on this activity and code your alignment to reflect those things common to all courses with the same name. After mapping GSEs for each course, you can review GSE alignment with other courses you and your colleagues teach. Each teacher will eventually map each course taught before results are compiled and analyzed across courses.

3. **Use the corresponding GSE document to review each GSE and code it for alignment with your course.** Copy the GSE code and indicate: "I" if included for instruction; "A" if assessed in this course; and (+/√/-) if the expected rigor in this course is greater than (+), comparable to (√), or less (-) than that described in the GSE. Refer back to page 8 for an example in filling out the course mapping template.

➢ Part 2 - Compile Individual Course Mappings for Analysis

After each teacher completes course mappings for all courses taught, teams of teachers can meet to compile their data across courses. Although the example on the following page is of an English department's analysis of grade 9 courses, *cross discipline course comparisons are strongly encouraged for the GSEs, and are essential for the Applied Learning standards*. This multi-layered approach will generate valuable discussion about how different courses across different disciplines can support the common learning goals for ALL students. Deeper discussions can begin to explore effective instructional strategies and other support systems.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The aligned GSEs (step #3 coding above) that are taught AND assessed AND are of comparable or greater rigor than GSEs **are the only ones to be included for this broader analysis.** If GSEs are taught, but not assessed in a particular course, they would not be listed for analysis. If GSEs are assessed, but are of less comparable rigor, they would not be included for this analysis.

➢ Part 3 - Analyze Course Mappings & Possible Follow-Up Actions

After compiling course mapping data, school teams can make observations about what they have learned through this mapping process.

- Are there different expectations (content/rigor) for different courses by the same name?

- Do students have multiple opportunities (during grades 9 and 10) to demonstrate learning of the standards - GSEs and Applied Learning Standards?
- What are the "aces" (things we are doing well)?
- What are the "spaces" (potential gaps we may want to address)?
- What actions do we want to take to address issues we have uncovered?

***Sample* ELA High School Course Alignment Review Matrix – GRADE 9 course summary**

The reading content clusters list related GSEs for local curriculum and assessment. After reviewing the descriptions of reading concepts and skills for each of RI's HS reading GSEs, teachers indicated which GSEs are consistently taught, assessed, and have comparable expectations for rigor in each course offered to grade 9 students. **This form summarizes course alignment for all ELA courses offered to grade 9 students at NBHS.** (* = required for all grade 9 students)

Reading Content Clusters	Course: Eng 9 Lev 1	Course: Eng 9 Lev 2	Course: Eng 9 Hon	Course: Basic Writing*	Course: Lit Support
R11 – Reading Fluency and Accuracy R—11.1 Accuracy R—11.2 Fluency R—11.3 Fluency	R—11.1				R—11.1
R2 and R3 – Vocabulary Strategies and Breadth of Vocabulary R—2.1 Using strategies R—3.1 Identifying synonyms R—3.2 Selecting appropriate words	R—2.1 R—3.1 R—3.2	R—3.1 R—3.2	R—3.1 R—3.2	R—3.2	R--2.1 R—3.1 R—3.2
R4 – Initial Understanding of Literary Text R—4.1 Identify, describe, or make predictions R—4.2 Paraphrase or summarize R—4.3 Generate questions R—4.4 Identify text features R—4.5 Identify literary devices	R—4.1 R—4.2 R—4.3	R—4.1 R—4.2 R—4.3			R—4.1 R—4.2 R—4.3 R—4.4
R5, R6, and R16 – Analysis and Interpretation of Literary Text R—5.1 Explain and support R—5.2 Examine characterization R—5.3 Make inferences R—5.4 Explain point of view R—5.5 Explain author's message or theme R—6.1 Use of literary devices R—16.1 Compare stories R—16.2 Provide relevant details	R—5.1 R—5.3 R—5.4 R—5.5 R—6.1 R—16.1	R—5.1 R—5.2 R—5.3 R—5.4 R—5.5 R—6.1 R—16.1 R—16.2	R—5.1 R—5.2 R—5.3 R—5.4 R—5.5 R—6.1 R—16.1 R—16.2		R—5.1 R—5.3 R—5.5
R7 – Initial Understanding of Informational Text R—7.1 Obtain information R—7.2 Using information to answer R—7.3 Organizing information R—7.4 Generate questions R—7.5 Identify text features	R—7.1 R—7.2 R—7.3	R—7.1 R—7.2 R—7.3	R—7.1 R—7.2 R—7.3	R—7.1 R—7.3	R—7.1 R—7.2 R—7.3 R—7.5
R8 - Analysis and Interpretation of Informational Text R—8.1 Explain connections R—8.2 Synthesize and evaluate R—8.3 Draw inferences R—8.4 Distinguish fact/opinion, bias R—8.5 Make inferences R—8.6 Evaluate clarity and accuracy	R—8.1 R—8.3 R—8.4 R—8.5	R—8.1 R—8.3 R—8.4 R—8.5	R—8.1 R—8.2 R—8.3 R—8.4 R—8.5 R—8.6		R—8.1 R—8.3 R—8.4
R12 and R13 – Reading Strategies R—12.1 Using self-monitoring R—13.1 Comprehension strategies	R—13.1	R—13.1			R—12.1 R—13.1
R14 – Habit of Reading Widely R—14.1 Reading with frequency R—14.2 Wide range of texts R—14.3 Multiple texts for depth *R—17 Literate Community*	R—14.1 R—14.2	R—14.1 R—14.2	R—14.1 R—14.2 R—14.3		R—14.1
R15 – Research across Content Areas				R—15.1	

R—15.1 Identify potential sources R—15.2 Evaluate information R—15.3 Organize, interpret information R—15.4 Draw conclusions				R—15.2 R—15.3 R—15.4	

Analysis of Course Mapping – What did NBHS learn about Access and Opportunity for grade 9 students in ELA?

At NBHS, five ELA courses are offered to freshman. Basic Writing is required for all students. One other English course is also required for ALL students – English 9 Level 1, English 9 Level 2, English 9 Honors, or Literacy Support. The Literacy Support course is required for those students with a Personal Literacy Plan (PLP). Course Mappings for the 5 English courses offered to freshman at NBHS identified several interesting and important factors about student access and opportunities for demonstrating learning of high school reading GSEs. Briefly, here are the key points that were identified by the English department after reviewing the summary grade 9 matrix (on page 10).

- **At your tables, discuss one or more of the NBHS observations and make some recommendations for possible actions to be taken.**

Issues Identified through Course Mapping	Recommend Possible Actions to be Taken
Most teachers feel they teach to some GSEs but do not consistently assess them or even assess them at all formally. These are **lost opportunities for formative and summative assessment**.	
Higher level thinking skills (**R5, 6, 8, 16** - analysis and interpretation of text) are not stressed in all English courses. They seem to be taught primarily in Honors English only. Students in the Literacy Support course are getting extra support only on basic skills. English Level 1 and 2 could include more.	
A range of comprehension strategies (R 12, 13) is not taught and assessed in all English courses. There is an assumption that high-performing students do not need this support, even though their texts are increasingly more difficult. Many strategies could be applied to other content areas for informational texts.	
Some teachers have already developed **excellent models for assessing some areas/GSEs.**	
A range of texts is not used for instruction and assessment in all English courses. Is there an assumption that all students do not need this variety of text types? This will not help to prepare all students for the high school assessment.	
GSEs are for grades 9-10, not just grade 9… and should not only be taught and assessed in English courses.	
Connections to Applied Learning Standards - many	

of the Applied Learning Standards overlap with ELA GSEs (research, communication, critical thinking, etc.). Are Applied Learning Standards consistently addressed instructionally in ELA courses and across the school?	
Other Observations?	

The staff at NBHS identified these possible actions to be taken…

Issues Identified through Course Mapping	NBHS's Possible Actions to be Taken
Most teachers feel they teach to some GSEs but do not consistently assess them or even assess them at all formally. These are **lost opportunities for formative and summative assessment**.	Develop/find local assessments that can be easily used for areas such as: fluency, class discussions, range of genres. Good assessment models in use (Literacy Support course might have some) should be identified and shared across classrooms.
Higher-level thinking skills (analysis and interpretation of text) are not stressed in all English courses. They seem to be taught primarily in Honors English only. Students in the Literacy Support course are getting extra support only on basic skills. English Level 1 and 2 could include more.	All ELA courses need to include instruction and assessment of analysis and interpretation of text. This can be done even if the texts differ in difficulty. Teacher perceptions about low-performing students not being able to apply higher-level thinking must also be addressed.
A range of comprehension strategies is not taught and assessed in all English courses. There is an assumption that high-performing students do not need this support, even though their texts are increasingly more difficult. Many strategies could be applied to other content areas for informational texts.	All ELA courses – and other content area courses - need to include some direct instruction of reading strategies appropriate to a wider range and difficulty of texts. This would help all students to be more successful in reading and understanding text book and other reading and research assignments. Professional development needed for ALL staff to ensure content-specific appropriateness and consistency across courses.
Some teachers have already developed **excellent models for assessing some areas/GSEs.**	Good models should be identified and shared across classrooms. Could incorporate into department meetings first, then wider sharing at staff meetings or professional development workshops.
A range of texts is not used for instruction and assessment in all English courses. There is an assumption that all students do not need this variety of text types. This will not help to prepare all students for the high school assessment.	The focus of in-service time or department meetings for English teachers: locate appropriate texts of varying difficulty, text types, and interest for instruction and assessment.
GSEs are for grades 9-10, not just grade 9… and should not only be taught and assessed in English courses.	During grades 9-10 ALL students must have access & ample opportunities to demonstrate learning of GSEs and *Common Core*. Grade 10 course offerings need to be reviewed in conjunction with grade 9 course offerings across all courses
Connections to Applied Learning - many of the Applied Learning Standards overlap with ELA GSEs (research, communication, critical thinking, etc.). Are Applied Learning Standards consistently addressed instructionally in ELA courses and in courses across the school?	Review *assessments* used in ELA and across other content areas to assure that *ALL* students have multiple opportunities across grades for learning and getting feedback on their performance related to the Applied Learning Standards. This will provide important preparation before grade 12 for senior exhibitions.
Other Observations	

Course Enrollment Patterns for Grade 9 Students at NBHS

As stated previously, 5 courses are offered to the freshman students at NBHS. Basic Writing is required for all grade 9 students. All students also take one English course – English 9 Level 1, English 9 Level 2, English 9 Honors, or Literacy Support. The Literacy Support course is required for those students with a Personal Literacy Plan (PLP). Literacy Support is an ELA course providing targeted remediation to some students - the intent being to reduce the number of potential high school drop-outs and to increase the number of NBHS students who can enter RI community colleges without needed intensive remediation.

The review of course enrollment patterns for freshman at NBHS (below) helped to identify which students had the least and/or greatest access to the full and rich curriculum and instructional opportunities offered at the school.

***Sample* ELA High School Course Enrollment for GRADE 9**
This table summarizes course enrollment patterns for all ELA courses offered to grade 9 students at NBHS. (Basic Writing is required for all grade 9 students)

Freshman Student Population	Course: Eng 9 Lev1	Course: Eng 9 Lev2	Course: Eng 9H	Course: Basic Writing	Course: Literacy Support
All grade 9 students = 280	**125**	**75**	**38**	**All students**	**42**
Grade 9 students by Race/Ethnicity **Caucasian = 135** **Hispanic = 75** **African American = 50** **Other = 20**	 **C =50** **H = 30** **A = 21** **O = 6**	 **C = 58** **H = 18** **A = 15** **O = 2**	 **C = 22** **H = 8** **A = 6** **O = 2**	**All students**	 **C = 5** **H = 19** **A = 8** **O = 10**
Regular Ed Students = 254	**116**	**72**	**37**	**All students**	**29**
IEP Students = 26	**9**	**3**	**1**	**All students**	**13**

Analysis and Action Planning from Course Enrollment at NBHS

The NBHS staff analyzed the course enrollments for grade 9 ELA courses. The course enrollments were broken down by major racial/ethnic subgroups and by regular/special education groups.

The count summary is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Grade 9 ELA Course Enrollment Data for NBHS

	LitSup	Eng9L1	Eng9L2	Eng9H	Total
Caucasian	5	50	58	22	135
Hispanic	19	30	18	8	75
African-American	8	21	15	6	50
Other	10	6	2	2	20
Total	42	125	75	38	280
% of Total	15.0	44.6	26.8	13.6	
RegEd	29	116	72	37	254
SpEd	13	9	3	1	26
SPED % of Course	44.8	7.8	4.2	2.7	10.2

The NBHS staff created two graphs of percentages of student enrolled. Graph 1 shows the percentage of students enrolled in each course, broken down by subgroup within each course. Graph 2 shows the percentage of students in each subgroup, broken down by each course.

Figure 1: Percentages of Students Enrolled, by ELA Course, by Racial/Ethnic Subgroup in NBHS

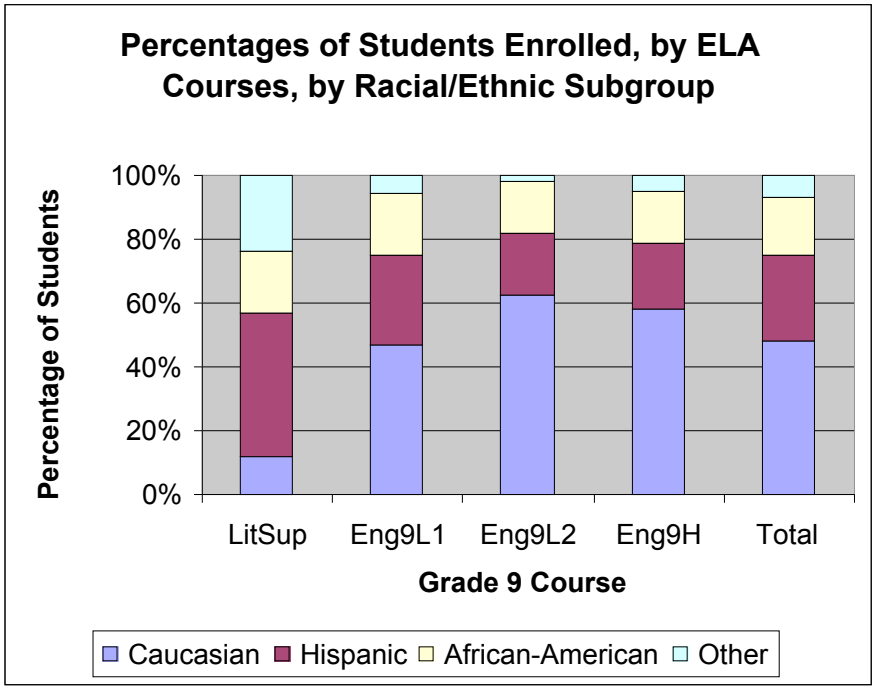
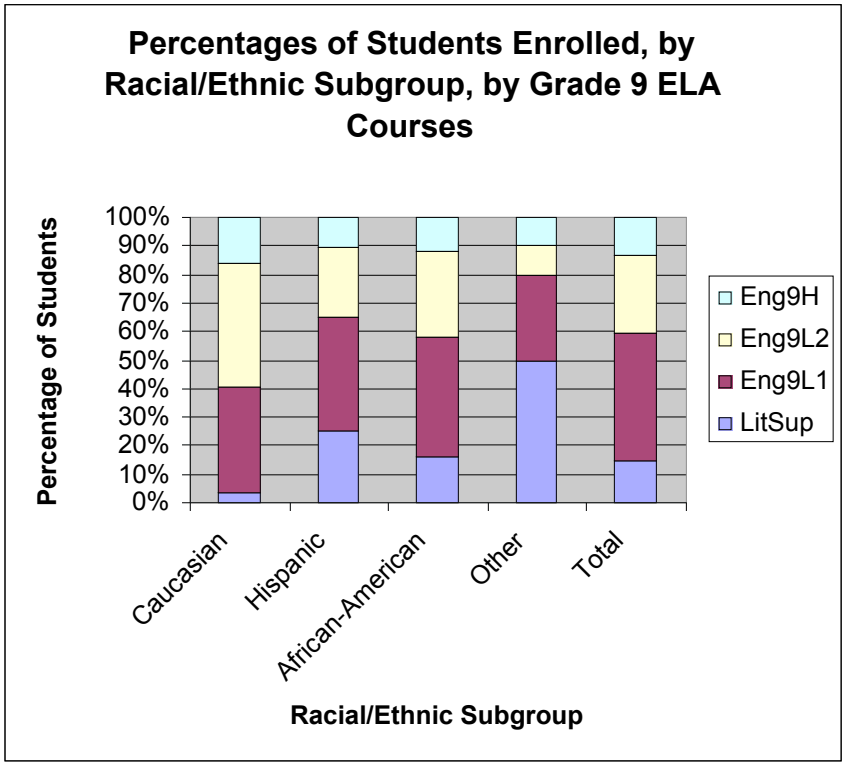


Figure 2: Percentages of NBHS Students Enrolled, by Racial/Ethnic Subgroup, by Grade 9 ELA Courses



After discussing the enrollment data, the NBHS staff identified several issues related to the course enrollment patterns, and also possible recommended actions.

Issues Identified through Course Enrollment Patterns	**NBHS's Possible Actions to be Taken**
Almost 60% of all students are enrolled in Literary Support or English Level 1, which means they are not exposed to some higher-level skills (e.g., in analysis of informational text and synthesizing across multiple texts) in their ELA courses.	Strengthen English Level 1 to include more of these higher-level skills. Emphasize these skills in other subject-matter courses these students take, or in their other learning experiences.
The majority of Hispanic (65%), African-American (59%), and Other students (80%) are enrolled in the lower two courses, Literary Support and English Level 1. 40% of all Caucasian students are enrolled in these two courses.	Work to increase the proportional enrollment in English Level 2 and Honors for Hispanic, African-American, and Other students by working with the middle school.
15% of all grade 9 students are enrolled in Literary Support, including 50% of all Other students.	Review placement policies—do all these students need to be placed in this course? Could a supplemental summer course be

	offered prior to grade 9 to help borderline students enroll in English Level 1 instead? Does the school have the ability to assess accurately the literary abilities of Other students?
About the same percentage of students in each racial/ethnic subgroup are enrolled in English Honors (10%), indicating students from all racial/ethnic subgroups can qualify for rigorous courses.	Work to increase the total enrollment in English Honors by one section, or to approximately 54 students over the next five years. This can be done by working with the middle school to strengthen the middle school curriculum.
NBHS has a lower percentage (10%) of students identified as special education than the state average. Special education students are three times more likely to be enrolled in Literary Support (45% of all SPED students) than are regular education students (15%).	Review placement policies. Review individual cases. Work with middle school. May need to supplement with additional instructional opportunities.
	Review course sequence of Level 1, grade 9, 10, 11, and 12. Strengthen to ensure students are prepared to graduate.
	Review instructional effectiveness in each course to ascertain whether subgroups are learning differential amounts.
Other…	

Some Questions for Future Discussions and Local Action Planning

1. **Do *ALL* students at our school <u>now</u> have equal access and opportunities to learn?**

2. **How will courses change or be adapted to meet the needs of *most* students?** (Are there better ways to ensure that the "system" meets the needs of most students *before* creating additional or remedial programs to meet the needs of some students?)

3. **How will courses change, be adapted, or be supplemented to meet the needs of students with specific or unique needs?**
   - Students who move in and out of the district
   - Students with limited English proficiency
   - Students with little support outside of school
   - Students who …

4. **Will instruction and assessments of similar content (GSEs) give us sufficient evidence to determine proficiency?**

5. **What do our learning opportunities outside of traditional course structures offer?**

6. **In what ways can GSEs or Applied Learning Standards be consistently taught, reinforced, and assessed across courses, content areas, and grade levels?**

7. **Other related topics for our school's PBGR discussion?**